

Committee on Public Planting Minutes
January 8, 2014
5:30-7:00pm, DPW, 147 Hampshire Street

Present:

City Arborist David Lefcourt

Co-Chairmen Dave Davis and Michael Hanlon

Community Development Representative Taha Jennings

Chantal Eide, Thomas Flynn, Paula Cortes, Nancy Phillips, Carolyn Matthews, Emily Axelrod, Maggie Booz

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm, Minutes taken by Maggie Booz.

Minutes from the December 2013 meeting were accepted.

Next meeting scheduled for February 12th, Minute-takers sign-up sheet passed around.

Business:

Taha brought up Municipal Ordinance, Chapter 2.106, "Committee on Public Planting" and distributed copies of the chapter that describes function, purpose, and make-up of Committee.

Dave D. suggested that Minutes and Agenda for CPP meetings could be projected on screen, saving paper; Paula indicated that some members like to take notes on the paper agendas.

Dave D. asked that action items by the Committee be designated as such on minutes and identified at the end of the minutes (herein dutifully executed).

Arborist Update, David Lefcourt:

There have been no changes to planting contracts since the last minutes.

A call for new members of the CPP went out yesterday or today, advertised by the City. David asked that we CPP members encourage citizens we know with a lot of tree knowledge to volunteer to participate. Emily asked how many members are on CPP now, and David estimated about 12 people, and said that there was a maximum allowable of 21. Particularly, there is no representative of East Cambridge on the CPP. If current members want to continue, they are required to send letters of interest.

Tree pruning: none is scheduled for the next 2-3 months on street, park, or cemetery due to budget (In house equipment problems required arborist to utilize Cambridge Landscape, budget restricted).

Emerald Ash Borer: Arborist has inspected all but 10 ashes of approx 925 City-Owned ashes, and made matrix rating trees on 1-12 (good to bad) scale, separated by location type (street, park, cemetery). Intends to treat all that are over 2" caliper. Based on estimated cost of \$12/caliper inch, he estimates that cost will be about \$150,000. Treatment is bi-annual thus he needs \$75,000 for one year/half the trees. Even infected trees that are still in good condition (less than 30% dieback) may benefit from injection of neem-based treatment. Infested trees in bad condition will be removed. Paula suggested that David should contact Cambridge Housing Authority to offer advice on their ash trees. Dave D. suggested that DL could write up what we are doing for treatment in a letter and send it to Arborists in adjacent towns (Somerville, Watertown, and Belmont).

Winter Moth: very bad this year, requires spraying for proper elimination and that is highly unlikely to be implemented in Cambridge.

DL is president of MA Tree Wardens and Foresters Association, and VP of Society of Municipal Arborists, of which he will be president next year. The MTWFA encourages all towns to have the position of Tree Warden/Arborist (which is already required by State law). He does proper planting technique seminars including one upcoming at Elm Bank in

Wellesley, teaches certified arborists how to teach their crews proper tree care. Cambridge has a reputation for being a leader in Urban Forestry.

Watering: Emily asked if street tree watering issue has had any resolution, DL responded that he is asking for funding of 2nd water-by-bike person. DL feels that bike watering capacity to cover the City's trees is great.

Community Development case for review-93 Kirkland Street

Residences in a B-2 Zoning District

(See section 5.33, Table 5-3, footnote (e) for CPP authority over this landscape proposal) Architect Mark Boyes-Watson and development partner Muireann Glenmullen presented their landscape plan for 93 Kirkland multi-family building renovation. The plan includes underground parking. Driveway will be relocated from eastern edge of site to western edge. Eastern edge will be planted with birch grove towards Kirkland Street, junipers further back at eastern end of driveway/parking recess. North boundary and on northern end of east and west property lines will be arborvitae hedges. Two trees at front of building flanking entrance. Planting expected to take place fall of 2014 or spring of 2015.

Recommendations to be described in letter from volunteer Nancy Phillips

- 1) Landscape plan as designed was approved subject to submission of a plant list that Architect/Developer will present to CPP in person at a later date
- 2) Birch grove good, but could be under-planted with spreading yews or broadleaf evergreens
- 3) Junipers not viable, CPP recommends Russian cypress to grow down onto driveway retaining wall in that location
- 4) Western property line fence could be planted with vines for additional privacy for neighbors and to soften edge
- 5) Feature trees at building front could be crabapples or red amelanchier
- 6) Street trees indicated on plan could be large shade trees due to absence of wires on that side of Kirkland Street

Library Tree replacement request from Cambridge Plant & Garden Club

CP&GC would like to replace a tree that was gifted to the Library by the Club previously but that died after Library construction project. Club has received permission from Library Director. DL suggested that Club choose location and tree species/variety, and then submit payment to City (after City tells them cost) and City would handle purchase and planting that would be accomplished as part of a City contract. DL also mentioned: did CP&GC pay for Gore Street park linden that City planted at their request.

Tree Hearing

DL started to go over trees for removal. DD asked could CPP be notified of tree hearings ahead of time, since some of the trees (notably one in front of Basta Pasta on Western Avenue) seemed worth considering to save. CPP should discuss whether we want to weigh in on tree hearings ahead of time.

Action Items:

- 1) Current members of the CPP who wish to continue must send letters of interest to Owen O'Riordan, DPW Commissioner at 147 Hampshire Street
- 2) David Lefcourt to contact CHA to offer advice about treating ash trees on their Properties

- 3) David Lefcourt to send letter to adjacent towns' Forestry Departments describing his ash tree rating matrix, and how we are treating the trees for Emerald ash borer
- 4) David Lefcourt will ask DPW for funding of second Water by Bike position
- 5) Nancy Phillips will draft letter to Architect/Developer cc'd to Community
- 6) Development on our review of 93 Kirkland landscape proposal.
- 7) Gather information from Cambridge Plant & Garden Club on what tree they would like to purchase as replacement for lost Library tree.
- 8) David Lefcourt to investigate whether CP&GC ever paid for Gore Street park linden, and if not, what the cost was that needs to be collected from CP&GC
- 9) CPP needs to discuss whether we want to review tree removal recommendations from the Arborist before he presents those trees in a public tree hearing – discussion should be Agenda item for February